

HAIRY MEN OF JAPAN.

A Curious Race of People What Appear to Be Growing Extinct.

At a meeting of the Anthropological Institute, reported at length in the London Globe, Miss Isabella Bird (Mrs. Bishop), the well-known traveller, read an interesting paper on the Aloos of Japan, that singular race of "hairy men" who are chiefly found in the island of Yesso.

Miss Bird spent some time in a village of Aloos near Volcano Bay, studying their manners and customs, and she illustrated her lecture with specimens of their dresses, utensils and weapons, as well as with lantern illustrations, some drawn by herself and others taken from Japanese artists, who, however, have caricatured the type of the people to a certain extent.

Miss Bird cannot decide whether or not the Aloos were the original inhabitants of Japan. They themselves say that they conquered and exterminated an earlier race of cave-dwellers. There is no doubt, however, that they were conquered by the Japanese.

The men range from 5 feet 4 inches to 5 feet 6 inches in height, are strongly built and muscular, and in some instances, especially among the mountain Aloos, are thickly covered all over, except the feet and hands and one or two other parts of the body, with short black hair.

Even children show a thick brown felt. The women are not hairy like the men, and have soft, brown skins where it is not "scaled by dirt," for, according to Miss Bird, these people never wash, except for feasts and festivals, and then only the hands or feet. The men have fine high foreheads, but Miss Bird wonders what they contain, as she has never met a sturdier people. The average weight of their brains is about five ounces.

They are hunters of the bear and other wild animals and are rude gardeners. They live on almost everything that is not poisonous, vegetable or animal, from slugs to beef, and their favorite dish is a "broth of abominable things to me," the phrase of Miss Bird, who was forced to eat it from courtesy.

The Aloos live in wooden houses all of the same construction, and sleep on platforms made private by curtains. Until the age of nine children of both sexes live naked, but after that they are completely clothed in a dress of bark cloth and Japanese cotton.

The men are also very obliging and gentle, with a singularly sweet smile, but very little head for matters outside their own business, and, in general, they have a sad and apathetic bearing. They are religious, believing in many gods, to which they offer libations of "saki"—that is, rice wine. "Saki" is like to prove their ruin. They are dying out in spite of the humane efforts of the Japanese Government to preserve them.

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